

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Office Action dated July 6, 2007 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

The specification is hereby amended to correct inadvertent errors.

Claims 1, 3, 7-9, 18, 20-22 and 25 are hereby amended. Claims 5, 6 and 19 are cancelled. No claims are added. Claims 11-17 were withdrawn. Accordingly, claims 1-4, 7-10, 18 and 20-25 are pending. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 18 and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over either U.S. Patent No. 6,032,494 to Tanigawa et al. (hereinafter "*Tanigawa*") or U.S. Patent No. 2,296,257 to Breckenridge (hereinafter "*Breckenridge*") in view of either U.S. Patent No. 2,264,307 to Haberstump (hereinafter "*Haberstump*") or U.S. Patent No. 2,966,052 to Syles (hereinafter "*Syles*"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and requests reconsideration.

As required in Chapter 2143.03 of the MPEP, in order to "establish prima facie obviousness of the claimed invention, all the limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art." The Applicants submit that *Tanigawa*, *Breckenridge*, *Haberstump* or *Syles* alone or in combination do not teach or suggest each and every element recited in claims 1, 18 and 25.

Independent claims 1, 18 and 25 are allowable over the cited references in that claim 1 recites a combination of elements including for example, "a nozzle provided below a gasket, ... wherein, the nozzle comprises an upper horizontal part extending from one end toward the drum, wherein the upper horizontal part has an upper surface, which is supported closely to the gasket; a vertical part extending from an opposite side to a side facing the drum to a lower side; and a lower horizontal part extending from a lower end toward the drum." Claim 18 recites a combination of elements including for example, "a nozzle provided below a gasket, ..., wherein the nozzle comprises an upper horizontal part extending from the other end toward the drum; a vertical part extending from an opposite side to a side facing the drum to a lower side; and a

lower horizontal part extending from a lower end toward the drum.” Claim 25 recites a combination of elements including for example, “a nozzle positioned below the gasket, wherein ... the nozzle comprises: a vertical part extending downward from a lower surface of the gasket; and a lower horizontal part extending from a lower end of the vertical part toward the drum.” *Tanigawa* or *Breckenridge* in view of either *Haberstump* or *Syles* do not teach or suggest at least these features of the claimed invention.

Tanigawa discloses a “nozzle 59 for circulating washing water during washing.” *Tanigawa* col. 11. lines 28-29 and Fig. 7. As shown, the nozzle of *Tanigawa* is provided behind the gasket and does not include all of the features recited in the claims stated above. Thus claims 1, 18 and 25 are not obvious over *Tanigawa*.

Breckenridge, teaches that “water is admitted to the tub 10 through the spout 31.” *Breckenridge* at p. 2 lines 43-44, second column and Fig. 1. As shown, the spout 31 of *Breckenridge* does not include all of the features recited in the claims stated above. Thus claims 1, 18 and 25 are not obvious over *Breckenridge*.

Haberstump and *Syles* fail to cure the deficiencies of *Tanigawa* or *Breckenridge*. *Haberstump* merely teaches a water inlet (190) supported in one of the radial ridges (102) and is secured, as by welding to the annular ridge (82). *See* p. 3 the right column, lines 15-18. There is absolutely no teaching or suggestion in *Haberstump* of the features recited in the claims stated above.. Thus claims 1, 18 or 25 are not obvious over *Haberstump*.

Syles merely teaches a nozzle (52) carrying an inlet (53) adapted to be connected to a hose or other conduit (54). *See* Fig. 3 and column 4, lines 43-46. As shown in Fig. 6, the nozzle of *Syles* is provided below a duct wall. Thus, *Syles* does not teach or suggest all of the features recited in the claims as stated above.

For at least the aforementioned reason, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 18 and 25 are patentably distinguishable over *Tanigawa*, *Breckenridge*, *Haberstump* and *Syles*. Accordingly Applicants request that the rejection of claims 1, 18 and 25 be withdrawn.

Claims 2-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the prior art as applied to claim 1 further in view of Japanese Patent No. 2001-9188 (hereinafter "*Japan '188*"), German Patent No. DE3811583 (hereinafter "*Germany '583*") or German Patent No. DE4330079 (hereinafter "*Germany '079*"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration.

Japan '188, *Germany '583* and *Germany '079* fail to cure the deficiencies of *Tanigawa*, *Breckenridge*, *Haberstump* and *Syles*. There is absolutely no teaching or suggestion in *Japan '188*, *Germany '583* or *Germany '079* of "a nozzle provided below a gasket, ... wherein, the nozzle comprises an upper horizontal part extending from one end toward the drum, wherein the upper horizontal part has an upper surface, which is supported closely to the gasket; a vertical part extending from an opposite side to a side facing the drum to a lower side; and a lower horizontal part extending from a lower end toward the drum," as recited in independent claim 1. Claims 2-4 are at least allowable by virtue of their dependency from independent claim 1.

Claims 5-7, 10, 19 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the prior art as applied to claims 1 and 18, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 783,826 to Dinkel (hereinafter "*Dinkel*") or U.S. Patent No. 1,507,350 to Franzen (hereinafter "*Franzen*"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration.

Dinkel or *Franzen* fail to cure the deficiencies of *Tanigawa*, *Breckenridge*, *Haberstump* and *Syles*. There is absolutely no teaching or suggestion in *Dinkel* or *Franzen* of "a nozzle provided below a gasket, ... wherein, the nozzle comprises an upper horizontal part extending from one end toward the drum, wherein the upper horizontal part has an upper surface, which is supported closely to the gasket; a vertical part extending from an opposite side to a side facing the drum to a lower side; and a lower horizontal part extending from a lower end toward the drum," as recited in independent claim 1. Further, there is absolutely no teaching or suggestion in *Dinkel* or *Franzen* of "a nozzle provided below a gasket, ..., wherein the nozzle comprises an upper horizontal part extending from the other end toward the drum; a vertical part extending from an opposite side to a side facing the drum to a lower side; and a lower horizontal part extending from a lower end toward the drum," as recited in independent claim 18.

Moreover, there is absolutely no teaching or suggestion in *Dinkel* or *Franzen* of “a nozzle provided below a gasket, ... wherein the nozzle comprises: a vertical part extending downward from a lower surface of the gasket; and a lower horizontal part extending from a lower end of the vertical part toward the drum,” as recited in independent claim 22. The rejection of claims 5, 6 and 19 is moot as claims 5, 6 and 19 are canceled. Thus claims 7 and 10 are at least allowable by virtue of their dependency from independent claim 1.

Claims 8, 9, 20, 21, 23 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the prior art as applied to claims 1 and 18 further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,750,956 to Mastman (hereinafter “*Mastman*”) or U.S. Patent No. 4,168,033 to von Bernuth et al. (hereinafter “*von Bernuth*”). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration.

Mastman or *von Bernuth* fail to cure the deficiencies of *Tanigawa*, *Breckenridge*, *Haberstump* and *Syles*. There is absolutely not teaching or suggestion in *Mastman* or *von Bernuth* of “a nozzle provided below a gasket, ... wherein, the nozzle comprises an upper horizontal part extending from one end toward the drum, wherein the upper horizontal part has an upper surface, which is supported closely to the gasket; a vertical part extending from an opposite side to a side facing the drum to a lower side; and a lower horizontal part extending from a lower end toward the drum,” as recited in independent claim 1. Further, there is absolutely no teaching or suggestion in *Mastman* or *von Bernuth* of “a nozzle provided below a gasket, ..., wherein the nozzle comprises an upper horizontal part extending from the other end toward the drum; a vertical part extending from an opposite side to a side facing the drum to a lower side; and a lower horizontal part extending from a lower end toward the drum,” as recited in independent claim 18. Thus claims 8 and 9 at least allowable by virtue of their dependency from independent claim 1, and claims 20, 21, 23 and 24 are at least allowable by virtue their dependency from claim 18.

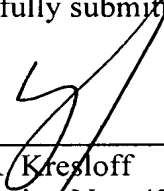
The application in condition for allowance. Early and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Dated: October 9, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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